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of Seggipe. His command area stretches from North of the River Japurá in the North, to Tefe in the East, and to the River Jurua in the South. His Western area covers 850 kms of the border with Peru and Colombia.

ARRIVAL

6. We arrived in Tabatinga on the morning of 4 June on a Cruzeiro flight from Manaus. This flight stops at Tefe, Tabatinga and finally Iquitos (Peru) and takes place twice a week in each direction. Tabatinga has one small airstrip, and in order to ensure he does not overrun, the pilot put the plane down hard and immediately used full power reverse thrust. In the tiny airport building we were met by Tenente Coronel Borba and Major Lepny and their respective wives and we drove the 2 kms into Tabatinga along a mud road which was showing signs of recent heavy rains. In answer to our enquiries we were told that the rainy season is from November to May, when it rains much of the time, and in the remaining months it rains for about 40 minutes each day.

7. After settling in Major Lepny's house we lunched in the Army Hotel de Transito. The first item on our programme was a courtesy visit to a Colombian Admiral in Leticia the neighbouring Colombian town. We drove the 6 kms into Leticia along a tarmac road to which we mentally awarded a prize for the best maintained stretch of tarmac road yet found in Brazil (Itabuna near Ilheus is a close second). However not only does the area possess no stones, but being a military colony it relies on Federal funds for road building and maintenance and these funds come from Belém in Pará who do not see Tabatinga as being very high on their priority list.

8. There is nothing to indicate the division between the Brazilian town of Tabatinga and the Colombian one of Leticia save for a white plinth set back from the road. The two towns merge into each other. There are no barriers, no police posts and no customs. It may be helpful at this stage to say something about Leticia.

THE COLOMBIAN TOWN OF LETICIA

9. A study of any map, or of the sketch earlier in this paper, shows that Colombia possesses a rectangular slice of territory in the extreme south east which seems to project awkwardly into Peru. This slice includes Leticia. Until 1937 this slice of land belonged to Peru, but a dispute arose between Colombia and Peru over the area, and Brazil was asked to arbitrate. Brazil decided in favour of Colombia, though the Brazilian officers I met thought this was the wrong decision. The outcome, however, from a purely local standpoint, has created a friendly atmosphere between Brazil and Colombia and a distinctly icy one between Brazil and Peru, and between Colombia and Peru. (It must be added at this stage that whereas Brazil and Colombia are land neighbours in this area, Brazil and Peru are separated by the River Javari and there is no Peruvian town nearby).

10. Because of the political sensitivity of this formerly Peruvian slice of territory, Colombia is taking great pains to develop it. Leticia itself is a more modern and thriving town than Tabatinga, with a population about 50% more than the latter. It has an airport with several scheduled flights a day, as opposed to Tabatinga which has only two flights on Wednesdays and two on Saturdays.

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The Admiral and the Colonel discussed the incident and it was decided to resolve the issue by banishing the Colombian magistrate from the area. (I was told that it is not an offence to fire shots into the air in Colombia - in Brasil it is).

17. Borba also raised with the Admiral, treating it as a great joke, that he had recently read in the Bogotá paper: "Sucesso" that Brazil was planning to occupy Leticia from Tabatinga with 2,000 soldiers. Borba said it was all very well, but he needed another 1,400 soldiers to do the job!

18. The Admiral has a Company of Marines and two naval vessels in Leticia, but an Infantry Battalion may be added later. His appointment is for one year only and is rotational. (A one-star Air Force Officer is due to succeed him at the end of this year).

19. I asked the Admiral about the drug problem in Leticia and he said it was serious. He said the amount of money changing hands in Colombia over drugs is about equal to the value of Colombian exports. When buying a house (for example) in Leticia there are two prices; the normal price, and the under-the-table price in the drug racket world. Some of the cocaine money is spent in the casino in Leticia.

20. I asked whether the punishment for being caught with drugs was severe. He said any military caught would receive a jail sentence of 8-14 years, but he was less clear in his answer regarding punishment of civilians. He showed me a booklet produced in 1978 laying down harsh punishment rules for civilians involved in the drug traffic, but he said that a number of these rules had been annulled under pressure from Amnesty International and the "Left".

21. On the way back in the car I asked Colonel Borba what effect the Colombian drug traffic was having in his military colony. He said it has considerable effect, because in Tabatinga it can take a man a lifetime to earn money which can be earned illegally in Leticia in a month. This produced strong feelings and gave temptations for the Brazilians. He tried to deal with drug traffic by controls at the airport and embarkation points but it could not be stopped as it is too easy to enter Brazil illegally by water or air.

VI IT TO ATALAIA DO NORTE

22. On 5 June we were scheduled to visit Atalaia do Norte and Benjamin Constant; the former with a population of 3,000, the latter slightly larger than Tabatinga.

23. We set off by a high speed civilian motor launch at 9 am accompanied by a Brazilian Major and his wife, their two children and the son of the Commandant, the children being between 5 and 10 years of age. Our first stop was to be Atalaia (see sketch map) a 1 1/2 hr journey via the Rivers Solimões and Javari. The civilian boatman put the engine on maximum revolutions and we reached a speed of 38 knots, weaving and twisting to avoid the drift wood and logs floating down the Solimões. The waters were quieter and without driftwood when we entered the Javari, with Brazil on the port-side bank and Peru on the starboard. There were a few isolated wooden houses on either bank and we passed, infrequently, a ~~monteiro~~ ^{meadeira} or small river launch.

24. After about 1 hour our launch came to a sudden halt, in the

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a young Sergeant had heard our Anthem being played several years ago, remembered the tune and taught the others in two days to sing it in English. I am afraid his memory of the tune was weak but the intention was delightful.

34. I subsequently toured the installations and received an excellent briefing.

THE BRAZILIAN ARMY IN TABATINGA

35. Tenente Coronel Helio Borba, the Comandante do Comando de Fronteira do Solimões, is a tall, pleasant officer, who speaks in a slow deliberate manner. He had been only 8 months in Tabatinga but had previously spent 12 years in other assignments in Amazonas. He is a Cavalry Officer and he volunteered for the job. He has four children, two married and living in Rio de Janeiro and a girl of 16 and a boy of 9 at the local school in Tabatinga.

36. His job as Comandante of CFE involves not only command of an Infantry Battalion and a Hospital, but also the varied, and unusual responsibilities as Commander of the Military Colony.

37. His immediate superior is the Comandante de Comando Militar de Amazonas (CMA) in Manaus.

38. Commander of the Military Colony. Colonel Borba has the same responsibilities over the civilians in the Colony as would a Prefeito. No civilian organisation of any kind exists. Borba can expel a civilian from the Colony, can allot land, register a civil marriage, order road maintenance and civil building projects. He has no powers of punishment over civilians (other than to expel them from the area) but his military police can arrest them and then they are removed to Benjamin Constant for trial. One of his officers is Prefeito Militar, another Prefeito Civil. He has another officer responsible for DETRAN work, has a foundry under his control, and an arms control organisation. The few civil police in the area come under him. The Federal Police are also represented and are active in combating the drug traffic.

39. Also under his command is a civilian hospital in Benjamin Constant, with medical and dental facilities.

Commander of Infantry Battalion

40. Wearing his other hat, Colonel Borba commands a Battalion of some 600 men whose roles are frontier defence (by presence) and development of the area. He has four Frontier Platoons deployed at Japurá, Ipiranga, Estirão and Palmeiras. Of these four platoons, all can be reached by river (up to eight day journey in one direction to the furthest) or aircraft, and one only by a Catalina flying boat. Each platoon has an Army Doctor and Dentist to treat both the military and civilians in the area, and run a school for all children, using the available military personnel as teachers.

41. An unusually high percentage of his Battalion are regular soldiers (40%). Some 50% of them were born in the immediate area, most of the remainder come from Manaus. All soldiers receive an increment of 40% of their salary to compensate for the difficult

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dental facilities, as well as adequate surgery, gynaecology, pediatric and x-ray facilities. Some patients are Colombians who prefer to attend there where treatment is free, than to attend a Colombian hospital where even the very poor are expected to pay something.

49. The doctors to whom I spoke were adamant that the main problems in the area were lack of hygiene and sanitation, as well as lack of variety in diet. No one in the area dies of starvation, because fish, manioc and fruit are in abundance. What they do suffer from is lack of variety in diet, and diseases related to worms. A number of patients admitted to the hospital need to be taught how to use a toilet. There is much leprosy, which can be arrested but not cured, but the patient needs to take one pill a day for life and often fails to do so with a consequent progression of the disease. Much to our surprise we were told that malaria has been eradicated from the area.

50. The hospital carries out all childhood immunisation and accurate record cards are kept. There are a number of military and civilian nurses, and mothers with sick young children stay in the hospital.

BRAZILIAN-PERUVIAN RELATIONS

51. Over breakfast one morning in Major Leony's house I heard more about this subject. Some three months ago a Brazilian corvette was ordered to sail up the River Marañon (which is the local name for the River Amazon in that part of its course) above Tabatinga on a courtesy visit to a Peruvian port. I was told that although the River Marañon is in Peruvian territory, Peru has agreed that all shipping may use the River freely, providing she is informed beforehand. Brazil informed Peru of the proposed passage of her corvette, but some 70 nautical miles from Tabatinga a Peruvian navy vessel ordered the Brazilian corvette to stop and said she could not proceed, apparently on orders from the Peruvian Military. To reinforce the order the Peruvian vessel trained her guns on the Brazilian corvette and ended up by escorting her all the way back to Brazilian waters. A diplomatic protest has been made by Brazil to Peru, with no response to date, so I was told.

52. I was further informed that Peru has been restricting Ecuadorian and Colombian vessels from using the River Marañon. Both countries use this River as a trade outlet to the Atlantic via Manaus and Belém. It was suggested to me that Peru may be exploring for oil in the area of the River Marañon. Whatever may be the truth, there is no doubt that Brazilian-Peruvian relations in this small area are cold.

INTERNAL CONVERSATIONS WITH COLONEL BORBA

53. Borba said that the colonization of Tabatinga has been neglected in recent years. He said that General Jansen, the Commander of CMA in Manaus since 1977, (who was succeeded last month) had arrived in the area with the pre-announced intention to improve the operational efficiency of the area. (The area of CMA covers Amazonas, Roraima, Amapá, Pará, Rondônia and Acre, and is roughly twice the size of Western Europe). In doing so, General Jansen had not improved the development of the area.

54. Borba felt that the new Commander of CMA (General Leonidas) being a personal friend of the Brazilian Chief of the General Staff, would give a higher priority to development. Borba said that he

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to do without is good for her. The girl certainly does not lack friends. Her parents feel it is a salutary experience to live in the Amazon Region. Colonel Borba comes from Rio de Janeiro, his wife from the interior of São Paulo.

EDUCATION IN TABATINGA

65. Colonel Borba said that in his opinion the most valuable contribution to the future of the community lay in the Casulo. This is a kindergarden school for children of 3 to 5 years, run by the Irmãs de Caridade. The Legião Brasileira de Assistência (LBA) provide breakfast, snack and lunch with a balanced diet, at no cost to the parents. The children come from poor and needy backgrounds, and are taught simple hygiene and good habits. The teachers are local girls of good character and schooling who are given a few months training in child care, and as teachers receive \$31,500. a month.

66. There is one primary grade school and the teachers are qualified civilians who are attracted to the area by the three different wage packets they receive; one from the State, one from the Army and a supplement for working in a difficult region.

67. Civilian teachers are not attracted to the two secondary grade schools (presumably for lack of incentives) so the majority of the teachers are Army officers and Sergeants and their wives who are serving there, many unqualified. When the men go away on exercises (not very often) lessons are interrupted. Practically no textbooks exist and exercise books and pencils are sometimes unobtainable. Lessons are passed on either orally or on the blackboard.

68. The brighter child of an Army family who comes to the area from the big cities where education is more advanced, tends to suffer because of the lack of competition and finds he is behind others when he returns to a big city.

69. The Army in Tabatinga run a Centro de Treinamento Profissional. This accepts children over 12 after school hours, where they receive free training in trades that will eventually benefit the community, such as brickwork, carpentry and marine mechanics.

VISIT TO AN INDIAN COMMUNITY

69. On our last morning in Tabatinga we went by boat to visit a Tucui tribe of Indians at the community of Mariaçu, where some 1,500 of them live in primitive wooden huts. They fish, rear pigs and chickens and grow mandioca and some fruit. Only a few can speak any Portuguese. The women make woven string bags and weave baskets, sieves and tipitis (woven sausage shaped tubes to wring out the poisonous milk of the mandioc). They wear clothes, some had crosses around their necks and every hut had a red painted cross beside the door number. (SUCAM means that a malarial control unit has visited and inspected the hut). The crosses indicated that the family had been converted to the fanatic sect of "João da Cruz", a long-robed bearded fanatic in the manner of the old beatos in the sertão. He interpreted the Bible according to his own peculiarities, took Christ off the Cross and worshipped the latter. Hence his name. He had a wooden chapel built in the village but has now left the area and is living in a nearby village with a band of followers.

IMPRESSIONS

69. We left full of admiration for the dedication of the Brazilian Army in assisting with the development of the area, and for the sense

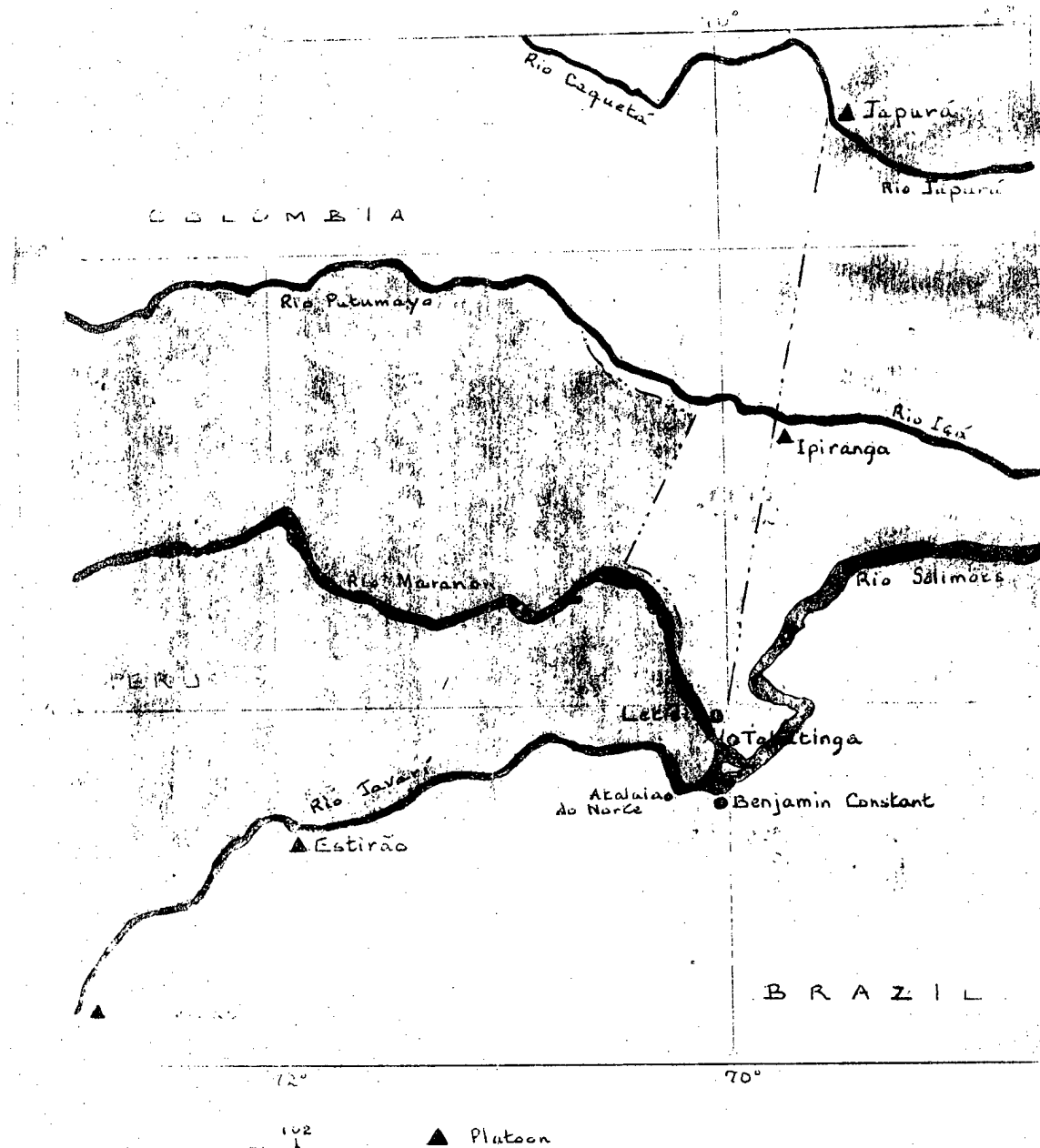
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